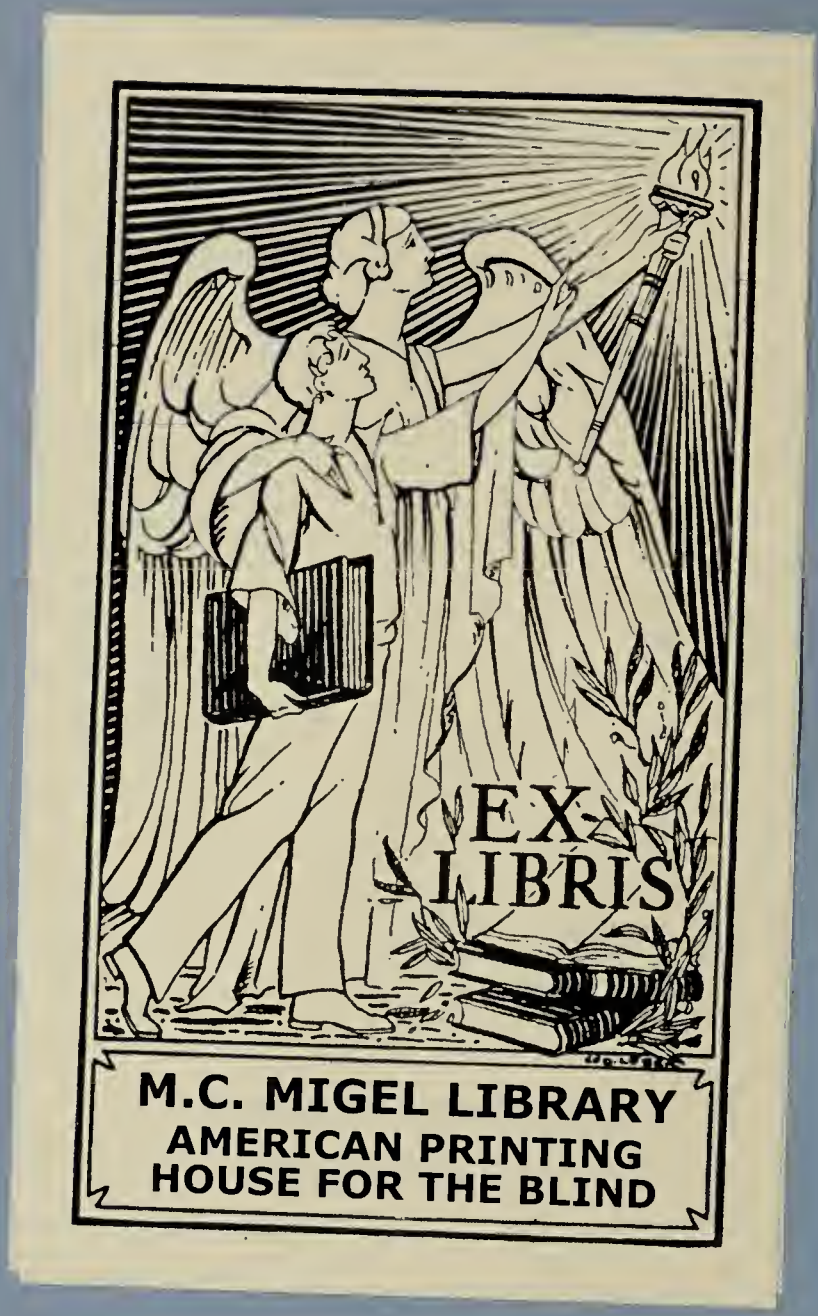
Skrzypek, Alexander.
THE CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY
SERVICES FOR THE BLIND AND
PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED.

HV1731
Sk69




M.C. MIGEL LIBRARY
AMERICAN PRINTING
HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

15 WEST 16th STREET
NEW YORK, N. Y., 10011

# the chicago public library services for the blind and physically handicapped

HV1731
SK69
Copy 2

*alexander skrzypek*
head, books for the blind and physically handicapped

The Chicago Public Library, through the Department of Books for the Blind and the Physically Handicapped, provides books in Braille, talking books, magnetic tapes and cassette tapes, ceiling projected books recorded on film, and large type books, to residents of Illinois who are eligible for this service. The program is carried on in cooperation with the Library of Congress.

The beginning of service for the blind dates back to 1893, when the Illinois Home Teaching Society turned over its collection of books in Moon Type, one of the early embossed systems of reading in use for some years since its invention by Dr. William Moon of England in 1848. A short time later other books in the New York Point and American Braille systems were added to the collection. These collections were very limited because of the cost of production of the embossed materials. The New York Point and Braille were dot raised systems which proved to be the center of many differences among educators for the blind. However these problems were settled in the year 1916, when the revised Braille system was adopted. This led to a uniform production of books in only one system, the Braille, thereby eliminating duplication of effort and the gradual development of collections of books in Braille.

Milestones in the national library program were reached in the 1930s with the establishment of a uniform system of English Braille and the development of the talking book record, and the enactment of legislation providing for regional circulating libraries for the blind and the production of Braille and talking book recordings.

Recent expansion of the library program resulted from the passage in July 1966, of Public Law 89-522, which authorized the Library of Congress to extend its free books-for-the-blind program to people who were unable to read conventional print materials because of physical limitations. This opened the world of books to many more persons who could not make use of the talking book or tape recordings which up to this time were provided to legally blind persons only.

Since reading normally involves the ability to hold a book or magazine, to turn pages, and to see the print clearly and comfortably for a reasonable length of time without special aides or devices other than regular eyeglasses, the degree to which a person's visual or manual dexterity is impaired will determine eligibility. The following are examples of physical handicaps where muscle or nerve deterioration or paralysis might be present: cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, arthritis, infantile paralysis, polio, or other ailments which prevent the use of conventional reading materials in book or magazine form.

The Chicago Public Library, Department for the Blind, is one of the designated regional libraries established by the Library of Congress in the year 1932. It is one of the original eighteen distributing or circulating centers. At present there are fifty such library centers in the United States and its possessions. Our library serves the entire state of Illinois. Ninety-eight percent of the borrowers receive materials and return them by mail, postage free, anywhere in the state.

The scope of the Braille, talking books, magnetic tapes, cassette tape and large type books is wide and varied. Novels range from the classics to the current best sellers and popular western and mystery stories. Nonfiction covers a broad area of subjects including books of travel, biography, science, history, poetry, drama, philosophy, religion, etc. In addition about fifty magazine titles are available in Braille, and thirty-seven titles in talking books and magnetic tape.

Braille books for the blind are embossed books in Braille characters and are read with the fingertips. Approximately 9,000 titles comprising more than 30,000 volumes are represented in the library collection.

Talking books are recordings of entire books



ILLINOIS LIBRARIES
Vol. 54, No. 4
April 1972, p. 296-300

on 10-inch discs, which are read or reproduced at 16 and 2/3 rpm, giving 45 minutes on each side. The recordings are made by professional readers. The talking book collection includes approximately 3,800 titles in multiple copies. Machines for use with the talking books are available through Community Services for the Visually Handicapped, State of Illinois, 160 North LaSalle Street Chicago, Illinois 60601, Telephone 793-2402.

The magnetic tape collection which supplements the talking book records includes materials of special interest for a growing audience of blind handicapped persons who furnish their own tape machine equipment for listening. Selection of titles is often based on requests by individual readers. Books and periodicals are taped on 7-inch reels at 3 and 3/4 inches per second on two tracks, by volunteers who have been auditioned by the Library of Congress. The library collection comprises 1,500 titles on more than 6,000 reels. Additional titles are available on loan from the Library of Congress on request.

The cassette books are tape recordings on cassettes which are recorded at 1 and 7/8 inches per second, giving a reading time of about 1 to 1½ hours on both sides of the cassette. At present cassette reproducing equipment is supplied by the Library of Congress in limited amount to readers, especially students. About 150 cassette books are available at present but new titles are being added.

During the last three years, the library has been designated to carry out an extension project of its services under the provisions of the Library Service and Construction Act, Title 4B. The plan for this project provides for the establishment of depository collections in the eighteen library systems of Illinois. To date there are thirteen library collections including the Regional Library for the Blind in Chicago.

About 98 percent of the borrowers do not have easy access to the library directly. Readers must deal with the library by correspondence and the telephone. The estimated number of potential readers indicates the necessity for providing more facilities to bring the readers into personal contact with the library and for finding the people in need of the services. More library centers will make services more accessible to them.

According to some estimates there are about 22,000 blind persons, 30,000 visually handicapped, who can read large type only, and 50,000 or more physically handicapped persons who are not able to read ordinary print because of their disability to hold a book in their hand to read.

Through the establishment of depository centers or branch libraries in Illinois library systems and in the larger libraries within the systems, it will become very practical to inform potential borrowers through the cooperative effort of the numerous public libraries in the state. Each public library can expedite methods of making the services known and finding the clientele in its community. The presence of small collections of talking books, magnetic tapes, and books in Braille will promote the use of these library services.

The Regional Library in Chicago has organized twelve depositories or branches in the various Illinois library systems. Our work plan calls for the establishment of five additional depositories. Upon completion of the depository system libraries, there will be a total of seventeen such collections.

The following is a listing of depositories and the date library service was started by each:

Shawnee Library System, Carterville,
March 1969

Bur Oak Library System, Joliet,
March 1969

Illinois Valley Library System, Peoria,
April 1969

Northern Illinois Library System, Rockford,
April 1969

River Bend Library System, Moline,
April 1969

Rolling Prairie Library System, Decatur,
October 1969

Kaskaskia Library System, Belleville,
November 1969

Western Illinois Library System, Monmouth,
March 1970

Cumberland Trail Library System, Flora,
March 1970

Corn Belt Library System, Bloomington,
May 1970

Lewis and Clark Library System, Edwardsville,
March 1971

North Suburban Library System, Elgin and Waukegan,
November 1971

We are planning additional depositories in the following Illinois library systems during the coming months:
Lincoln Trail Libraries, Champaign
Suburban Library System, Western Springs
DuPage Library System, Wheaton
Starved Rock Library System, Ottawa
Great River Library System, Quincy.

Depository collections are not limited to the Illinois library systems only. We are planning to contact various hospital staffs, especially the larger hospitals, to inform them of the services they can render to many of their patients who are eligible. Some of the patients are eligible for the services on an emergency basis for the period of their disability.

*A patron carries Braille books from the Department of Books for the Blind and Physically Handicapped—one of many kinds of reading material for the visually handicapped.*

All readers who have been approved for these library services are registered with the regional library. A duplicate registration record is sent to the library system serving the area in which the reader resides. All new borrowers are notified by letter of the depository collection in their area.

The library is also giving serious consideration to the planning of a new building for its collection of Braille, talking books, tapes and large type books. The housing of the collection in a more central area in the city will make the library facilities more easily accessible and will meet the need for much larger quarters for the collection and development of additional programs for borrowers.

Our plan proposes that public libraries can initiate surveys in their communities with the aid of volunteer groups and service clubs.

For the present the more popular media of reading materials, talking books, magnetic tapes and cassettes, will be supplied to advance this work. The collections can vary in size from 100 to 600 or more talking book titles and magnetic tapes.

Local library centers are provided with talking book machines for demonstration purposes or for use of the books in the library. The local public libraries can arrange for talking book machines to be supplied to eligible borrowers by contacting the offices of the community Services for the Blind, State of Illinois, which are located in several district offices.

The cooperating libraries will be in closer communication with the Regional Library in Chicago. A staff person, Lawrence Bloom, Jr., is acting as coordinator for the project. His duties In addition to organizing new depositories will be to work in the field and keeping contact with the libraries. The Regional Library will act not only as the guiding agency for the project, but also will serve as the media of coordination of these services in cooperation with the Library of Congress.

The availability of library services on a local level will facilitate cooperation with agencies responsible for the adjustment and rehabilitation of the blind and the physically handicapped persons, as well as with special education programs

and local schools.

An auxiliary service of the department, which is not carried on in cooperation with the Library of Congress, is the provision of projected books and ceiling projectors. Projected books are on microfilm that are projected on the ceiling with a ceiling projector. Pages of the books are turned by pressing a button either by finger, wrist bone, heel or toe. This book collection includes a varied selection of titles for children as well as for adults. The collection comprises about 235 titles and 306 copies. The ceiling projector is supplied by the library on a loan basis and may be kept as long as it is needed and is in active use.

The large type collection of books is a recent addition to our service and is intended for the use of visually handicapped persons who may prefer to use the books in large print although they are eligible to use talking books. At present there are about 350 titles in the collection. Volumes from this collection may be circulated free of postage to borrowers in the state, providing they are eligible, that is, they cannot read conventional print.

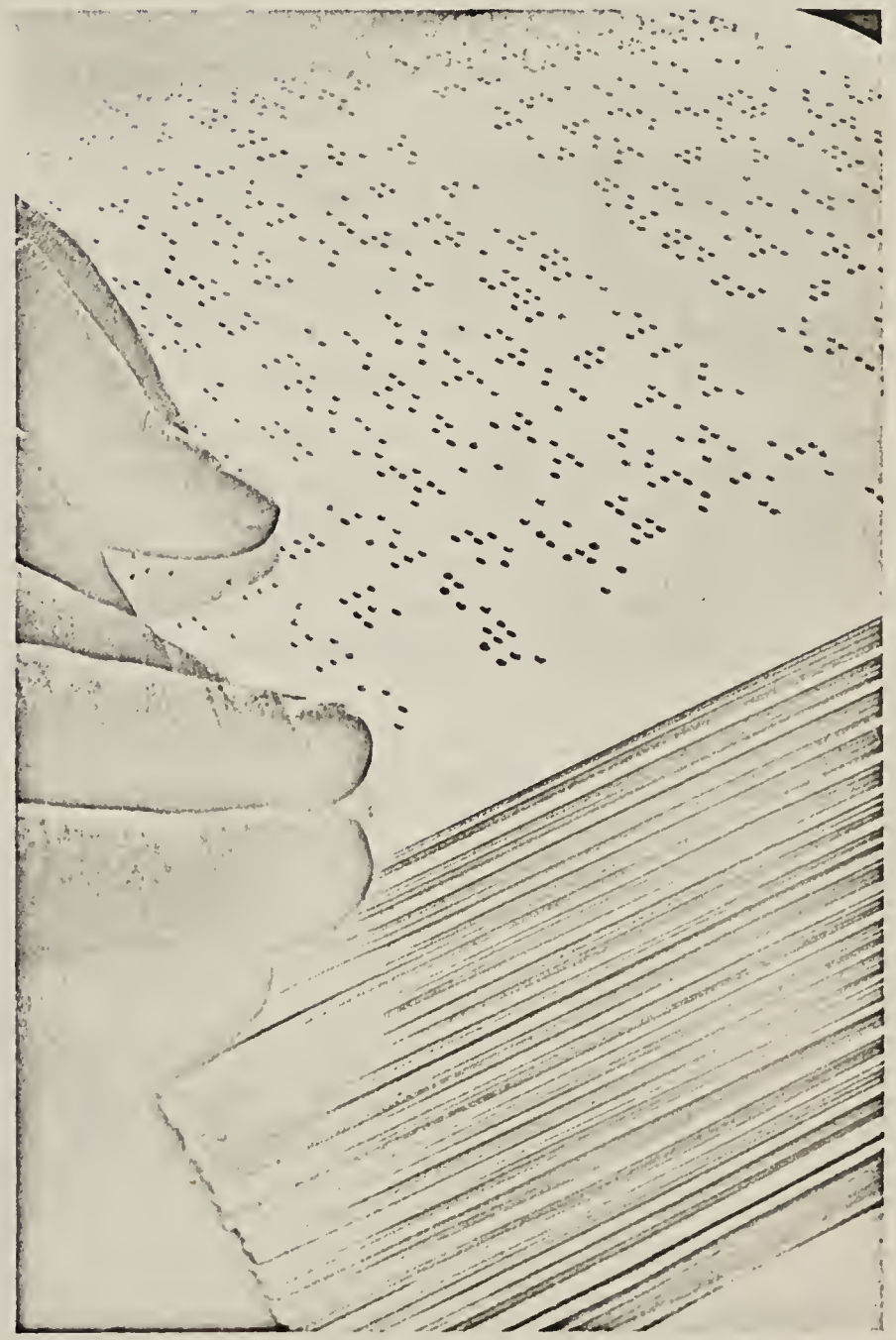
To qualify for these library services, an individual should obtain a brief and simple statement describing the characteristics of his physical disability and certifying his eligibility from such competent authority as a doctor, opthalmologist, optometrist, registered nurse, professional staff member of a hospital or other institution or agency or in the absence of any of these from a professional librarian. In cases of total blindness a statement by a responsible member of the community is accepted.

A letter of application for the service can be sent to the library or to the Community Services for the Visually Handicapped, State of Illinois, 160 North LaSalle Street, Chicago, Illinois 60601. Library service will begin as soon as a talking book machine is supplied.

Each borrower is supplied with a catalog of books available and a list of selections can be made and sent to the library. If a borrower should have difficulty in making selections, suggestions of the type of reading should be sent in so that selections can be made for the borrower.

Books selected and provided for libraries for the blind and physically handicapped range from titles of current and popular interest to classics and vocational and practical materials—the type of reading offered sighted persons using an average public library. Magazines also reflect a wide variety of tastes and needs and include such well known titles as the following:

| BRAILLE | TALKING BOOKS |
|---|---|
| *Readers Digest* | *American Heritage* |
| *Ladies Home Journal* | *Good Housekeeping* |
| *Braille Mirror* | *Sports Illustrated* |
| *Fortune* | *Nowswook* |
| *National Geographic* | *Changing Times* |
| *Consumers Bulletin* | *Holiday* |
| *Psychology Today* | *Readers Digest* |
| | *Atlantic and Harpers* |
| | *U.S. News and World Report* |



*A book with letters coded in raised dots—Braille, In a book for the blind at the Chicago Public Library.*

All materials are sent through the mail in fiberboard cartons provided for this purpose. Braille books, talking books, magnetic tapes, cassette tape recordings and large type books are returned to the library in the same fiberboard cartons in which they were received, using the reverse side of the mailing label which is preaddressed to the library. No postage is necessary.

The department has been located at the Hild Regional Branch Library since 1934. Libraries for the blind have reached a status of greater importance because of increased resources and greater potential for service to a larger number of persons who need the service.

About two years ago a Library Advisory Committee for services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped was organized. This committee is representative of several organizations and agencies for the blind, and the agencies representing the physically handicapped groups of persons eligible for such services. At a meeting of this committee in August 1971, it was decided that the new proposed location for the new building for the Braille, talking books and tape collections was acceptable. The new location will be at Blue Island Avenue and 12th Street, in a more central area in the city that will make the library facilities more easily accessible to the blind and physically handicapped. Also, the larger quarters will provide for a more suitable and convenient arrangement of the shelving areas, browsing, study, and reference section. In addition the working area for the mailing of books to borrowers will be increased. Most important the new enlarged facility will lead to the development of additional programs for the borrowers.

Among the many recommendations made by the Advisory Committee, the following topics are to receive careful study and serious consideration:

Accessibility to the new building so that the blind and physically handicapped may have easy entrance from the street level, with no stairs and no revolving doors.

If needed, elevators that are spacious enough to accommodate wheelchairs, one or more.

Rest rooms with proper level sink and towel racks, cubicles with wide doors, provision of wall grips and similar accessories that will make the use of the facility safe and comfortable.

Sufficient car parking area for patrons that may be brought in by automobile.

Various library facilities; rooms for volunteers to provide them with sufficient working area; space for tape recording and duplication; sound proof booths for recording and reading; cubicles that may be used for reading and listening to the recorded materials; a sufficient supply of talking book machines, cassette machines, Braille writers and typewriters; embossed card catalog in Braille of all the library materials. Lighting that is adequate and glareless.

A sufficient number of staff members to provide professional service such as reference and informational service, readers advisory service, as well as an increased number of clerical staff to handle large amounts of incoming and outgoing shipments of books by mail.

Development of a variety of programs to suit the needs of the borrowers.

CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY 1872 CENTENNIAL 1972

HV1731 Skrzypek, Alexander. c.2
Sk69 THE CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY
SERVICES FOR THE BLIND ...(1972)

Date Due

HV1731 c. 2
Sk69
Skrzypek, Alexander.
AUTHOR
THE CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY
TITLE SERVICES FOR THE BLIND AND
PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED. (1972)

| DATE DUE | BORROWER'S NAME |
|---|---|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR THE BLIND
15 WEST 16th STREET
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10011